Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment

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Committee against Torture

Concluding observations on the second periodic report of Serbia*

1. The Committee against Torture considered the second periodic report of Serbia (CAT/C/SRB/2) at its 1304th and 1307th meetings, held on 29 and 30 April 2015 (see CAT/C/SR.1304 and 1307), and adopted the following concluding observations at its 1322nd and 1323rd meetings, held on 12 May 2015.

A. Introduction

2. The Committee expresses its appreciation to the State party for accepting the optional reporting procedure, as it improves the cooperation between the State party and the Committee.

3. The Committee also appreciates the high level delegation of the State party, and the additional oral and written information provided by the representatives of the State party to questions raised and concerns expressed during the consideration of the report.

4. The Committee recalls its previous concluding observations (see CAT/C/SRB/CO/1, para. 22) and notes that the State party continues to declare that it is unable to monitor the application of the Convention in Kosovo owing to the fact that, pursuant to Security Council resolution 1244 (1999), civil authority there is exercised by the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK). The Committee considers that the Convention applies in Kosovo and therefore encourages UNMIK to provide the Committee, in cooperation with the institutions of Kosovo and without prejudice to the final legal status of Kosovo, with a report on the human rights situation there since June 1999.

B. Positive aspects

5. The Committee notes with satisfaction that the State party ratified the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and its Optional Protocol on 31 July 2009.

* Adopted by the Committee at its fifty-fourth session (20 April–15 May 2015).

6. The Committee welcomes the entry into force and adoption of and amendments to national legislation, including:

(a) The adoption of Law No. 7/2011, which designates the Protector of Citizens (Ombudsperson) of Serbia as a national preventive mechanism under the Optional Protocol to the Convention;

(b) The amendment to article 388 of the Criminal Code, increasing the penalties for the crime of trafficking in persons;

(c) The adoption of Law No. 72/09 on cooperation with the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia and the agreement of 2011 on the enforcement of penal sanctions imposed by the Tribunal;

(d) The adoption in 2014 of the Law on the Execution of Criminal Sanctions and the Law on the Enforcement of Non-Custodial Sanctions and Measures.

7. The Committee also commends the State party's efforts to amend its policies and procedures in order to afford greater protection for human rights and to apply the Convention, in particular:

(a) The adoption in 2011 of the National Strategy for the Prevention and Elimination of Violence against Women in the Family and in Intimate Partner Relationships and the general and special protocols for conduct in cases falling within the scope of the strategy;

(b) The adoption in 2013 of the National Judicial Reform Strategy for the period 2013–2018;

(c) The adoption of the Strategy for the Reduction of Overcrowding in Institutions for Enforcement of Criminal Sanctions for the period 2010–2015 and its Action Plan;

(d) The adoption of the Strategy for the Development of the Penal Sanctions Enforcement System, in 2013, and its Action Plan, in 2014.

C. Principal subjects of concern and recommendations

Definition of torture and statute of limitations

8. The Committee welcomes the information provided by the delegation that amendments to the Criminal Code are being prepared in order to address the definition of the crime of torture. In this respect, the Committee remains concerned that article 136 and article 137, paragraphs 2 and 3, of the Criminal Code, dealing with acts of torture, are not harmonized, and the fact that they are not aligned with all elements of the crime of torture, as defined in article 1 of the Convention. The Committee also regrets that the Criminal Code still maintains the statute of limitations in respect of the crime of torture, and that several criminal proceedings have been considered, consequently, statute-barred (arts. 1 and 4).

Recalling its previous concluding observations (see CAT/C/SRB/CO/1, para. 5), the Committee urges the State party to promptly implement the legislative measures necessary to harmonize the provisions of the Criminal Code dealing with torture and align them with the definition contained in article 1 of the Convention, by, among other things, including acts of torture perpetrated by or at the instigation of or with the consent or acquiescence of a public official or other person acting in an official capacity. The State party should ensure that acts of torture are punishable by appropriate penalties commensurate with their grave nature, in accordance with article 4 (2) of the Convention. The Committee urges the State party to repeal the

statute of limitations for the crime of torture and to take the action necessary to reinstate those investigations for acts of torture that have been discontinued owing to the statute of limitations.

Fundamental legal safeguards

9. While noting that the domestic legislation contains the fundamental legal safeguards against torture, the Committee is concerned at reports that medical examinations of detainees are often conducted in the presence of police officers and that medical reports frequently fail to include a detailed description of injuries or an interpretation of the findings. The Committee is also concerned at reports about the low quality of the work of ex officio lawyers, who often meet their clients only in court, and about the fact that persons summoned and interrogated by the police as witnesses, but later charged as defendants, have a right to counsel only from the moment they are charged. The Committee also takes note of reports indicating that the registration of detainees is often incomplete (arts. 2, 11 and 12).

The Committee urges the State party to ensure in practice that every person deprived of his or her liberty is afforded legal safeguards against torture from the outset of deprivation of liberty by, inter alia:

(a) **Ensuring that detained persons undergo an independent medical examination from the outset of the deprivation of liberty, which should be conducted out of hearing and, unless the doctor concerned explicitly requests otherwise in a given case, out of sight of police staff. The State party should also ensure that the record drawn up after the medical examination contains, inter alia: (i) an account of statements made by the person that are relevant to the medical examination (including his or her state of health and any allegations of ill-treatment); (ii) a full account of objective medical findings based on a thorough examination; and (iii) the health-care professional's observations in the light of (i) and (ii), indicating the consistency between any allegations made and the objective medical findings. The results of the examination should also be made available to the detained person concerned and his or her lawyer. Health-care professionals should not be exposed to any form of undue pressure or reprisals from management staff when they fulfil this duty, nor should the detained persons concerned;**

(b) **Reinforcing the system of free legal aid to ensure that the right to access to a competent and independent lawyer applies effectively to anyone who is under a legal obligation to stay in police custody;**

(c) **Keeping standard and comprehensive custody registers in all places of detention;**

(d) **Monitoring regularly the compliance with the legal safeguards by all public officials and ensuring that those who do not comply with those safeguards are duly disciplined.**

Impunity for acts of torture and ill-treatment

10. The Committee notes with concern that of 391 complaints of torture and ill-treatment filed with the Internal Control Department of the police between 2009 and March 2012, only 15 per cent resulted in disciplinary measures, the majority of which were fines. While the State party does not provide further information on the number and results of criminal investigations, the Committee is highly concerned at information that a condemnatory judgement was passed only in 15 per cent of the criminal cases filed since 2010, and that the most common sentence was one or two years' probation. The Committee is also deeply concerned about reports that, in the majority of cases, the complaints were

rejected by the prosecutor, and is alarmed by the amendments made to the Criminal Procedure Code in 2013, namely, that in cases of torture falling under article 137, paragraphs 2 and 3, the prosecutor is no longer under an obligation to conduct an investigation and the victim does not have the possibility of undertaking subsidiary prosecution (arts. 12 and 13).

The Committee urges the State party to adopt the measures necessary to change the culture of impunity of torture by, inter alia:

(a) **Amending the Criminal Procedure Code so that public prosecutors have a legal obligation to undertake prompt, effective and impartial investigations wherever there is reasonable ground to believe that an act of torture or ill-treatment has been committed as the result of the actions or omissions of State officials or persons acting in an official capacity, whether or not the victim has filed a formal complaint;**

(b) **Ensuring that an independent body that is not connected with or under the authority of the police conducts the investigations into all allegations of torture, ill-treatment and excessive use of force allegedly perpetrated by the police;**

(c) **Ensuring that every judge, on learning from a detainee's statement that he or she has been subjected to torture, takes the measures necessary to order a prompt and effective investigation into the matter wherever there are reasonable grounds to believe that the act of torture described has been committed;**

(d) **Ensuring that public officials under criminal or disciplinary investigation for allegedly having committed acts of torture or ill-treatment are immediately suspended from their duties and remain so throughout the investigation, subject to the observance of the principle of presumption of innocence;**

(e) **Guaranteeing that complainants and victims are protected against ill-treatment or intimidation that may arise as a consequence of their complaint, are duly informed of the progress and results of their complaint and are able to exercise their right to judicial remedy and participation in proceedings whenever they disagree with the prosecution's inaction;**

(f) **Duly bringing to trial alleged perpetrators of acts of torture or ill-treatment and, if they are found guilty, punishing them with penalties proportionate to the grave nature of their acts.**

Investigations of crimes under international law

11. The Committee welcomes the measures announced by the delegation to address the insufficient resources provided to the Office of the War Crimes Prosecutor and the slow progress made in prosecuting crimes under international law, particularly addressing command responsibility, crimes of sexual violence and the transfer and concealment of bodies in the mass graves of Batajnica, Petrovo Selo, Rudnica and Lake Perućac. The Committee also welcomes the commitment of the State party to reinforce the Witness Protection Unit, but remains concerned about the allegations of intimidation and ill-treatment of protected witnesses by members of the Unit that have yet to be addressed (arts. 2, 12 and 16).

The Committee urges the State party to abide by its commitment to reinforce the human and material resources of the Office of the War Crimes Prosecutor and remove the current barriers to the prosecution of crimes under international law, including torture, by, inter alia:

(a) **Ensuring that all persons, including senior and middle-ranking officials, suspected of having been complicit in, and perpetrators of, war crimes and crimes against humanity are brought to justice;**

(b) **Undertaking prompt, effective and impartial investigations into allegations of ill-treatment by members of the War Crimes Prosecutor;**

(c) **Strengthening the War Crimes Prosecutor and its protocols as well as the procedural rules for the examination of protected witnesses to ensure the highest standard of protection for the witnesses and their families.**

Conditions of detention

12. While welcoming the measures taken to reduce overcrowding and improve the material conditions and access to health care in places of detention (see paras. 6 (d) and 7 (c) and (d) above), the Committee is concerned that overcrowding in correctional facilities remains above 116 per cent, and takes note of information about poor detention conditions, particularly in police stations, a lack of meaningful activities and interaction between persons in detention, and insufficient health-care services, including mental health care, in prisons. The Committee is also concerned at information that the judiciary continues to favour incarceration measures and pretrial detention over alternative measures of detention, despite the efforts made by the State party to encourage the use of less restrictive measures. It remains concerned at the high number of deaths in custody, including suicides, as well as the incidents of inter-prisoner violence. The Committee also notes with concern information that "non-standard issue objects" are still occasionally found in rooms used for police interviews (arts. 2, 11 and 16).

The State party should continue its efforts to improve the conditions of detention in places of detention, in particular by:

(a) **Implementing effectively the measures designed to eliminate overcrowding, particularly through the wider application of non-custodial measures as an alternative to imprisonment, in the light of the United Nations Standard Minimum Rules for Non-custodial Measures (the Tokyo Rules);**

(b) **Fully implementing the recommendations of the national preventive mechanism, including by improving access to health care and ensuring full access to mental health-care services within all prison facilities and increasing the professional and recreational activities of persons in detention;**

(c) **Ensuring that all incidents of death, suicide, attempted suicide and violence in custody are reported to central authorities for monitoring purposes and that all cases are effectively and independently investigated and, on a finding of criminal responsibility, lead to a penalty proportional to the gravity of the offence. The State party should also ensure enhanced audio-video monitoring of interrogation rooms in police stations and prisons; detection and monitoring of at-risk detainees, adopting preventive measures regarding the risk of suicide and inter-prisoner violence, including by increasing the number of prison staff; and the ongoing monitoring of the storage of "non-standard issue objects".**

Redress

13. The Committee is concerned at information that the courts frequently apply legislation in such a way that claims for redress against the State will be statute-barred within five years of the event that led to injury or three years from the day of the plaintiff's knowledge of the damage. The Committee also notes with concern information that victims often fail to satisfy the high standard of proof of damage or harm set by the courts, even when diagnosed with post-traumatic stress disorder, and that when compensation is granted after lengthy proceedings, it is often very low. The Committee remains concerned at the lack of a specific programme to provide rehabilitation to victims of torture and ill-treatment (art. 14).

The Committee, recalling its general comment No. 3 (2013) on the implementation of article 14 by States parties, urges the State party to remove the various barriers set up in, and through the application of, the current legislation that impinge upon the exercise of the right of victims of torture and ill-treatment to a judicial remedy. To that end, the State party should refrain immediately from applying statutes of limitation to the claims made by victims of torture or ill-treatment against the State, as well as inadequate judicial procedures for proving or quantifying damages. The State party should also compile data on the number of victims of torture and ill-treatment, including war-related victims, forcibly mobilized refugees and victims among asylum seekers, and fully assess their needs, including the right to rehabilitation, by ensuring that specialized, holistic rehabilitation services are available, appropriate and promptly accessible without discrimination.

Access to a prompt asylum determination procedure

14. The Committee notes with serious concern the information provided by the delegation that of 16,490 persons expressing an intention to seek asylum in 2014, only 18 cases were assessed and six persons were granted refuge or subsidiary protection. It is concerned that the human resources of the Asylum Office are insufficient to respond adequately to the growing number of asylum seekers, resulting in the failure to promptly register asylum seekers and to enable those at the asylum reception centres to submit an asylum application. The Committee also takes into account reports that many potential asylum seekers incur penalties for their illegal stay, imposed in misdemeanour court proceedings during which asylum seekers do not enjoy free legal aid or effective information provided through interpretation services about the possibility of seeking asylum or the risk of being expelled. The Committee also notes that asylum seekers detained at Nikola Tesla Airport do not enjoy those rights either and are not provided with a detention order or an expulsion order that they could challenge (arts. 2, 3 and 16).

The State party should continue and intensify its efforts to facilitate access to a prompt and fair individualized asylum determination procedure in order to avoid the risk of refoulement. To this end, the State party should:

(a) **Ensure that the Asylum Office is supported with personnel and financial and technical resources sufficient to be able to register asylum seekers in a timely manner, promptly issue their identity cards, conduct individualized interviews with the support of interpretation services and issue refugee status decisions within a reasonable time. The State should address these deficiencies in the new draft law on asylum, including the lack of time-bound obligations;**

(b) **Establish and ensure the implementation of a standardized and accessible asylum and referral procedure in international airports and transit zones;**

(c) **Guarantee access to independent, qualified and free-of-charge legal assistance and interpretation services for asylum seekers throughout the asylum**

procedure, as well as in misdemeanour proceedings and when they are detained at the airport, in order to enable them to challenge the lawfulness of their deportation and detention orders.

Non-refoulement

15. Noting the Supreme Court's decision that expulsion to a "safe third country" should be contingent on the asylum officer's obligation to assess the situation on a case-by-case basis, the Committee is concerned at reports that, in practice, the safe third country rule is almost automatically applied. Moreover, the Committee is concerned about the State party's implementation of its forced return procedures and at reports of ill-treatment, including beatings and extortion of money, of undocumented migrants by law enforcement officials. It is also concerned at information that persons expelled from Hungary into Serbia are subjected to forced return to the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, in application of the readmission agreements, without effective procedural guarantees to gain access to legal remedies against the decision, free legal aid or information provided through interpretation services. The Committee is concerned that those individuals are at a heightened risk of refoulement, including chain refoulement (arts. 2, 3 and 16).

The Committee calls on the State party to ensure that the asylum determination procedure provides for a substantive review of applications that respects the principle of non-refoulement, irrespective of whether the country of destination is considered safe. The State party should also ensure full protection from refoulement by establishing the necessary legal and administrative safeguards and remedies in forced return procedures and thereby guarantee at all times that no person in need of international protection will be returned to a country where he or she is in danger of being subjected to acts of torture or cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment, conditions or punishment or to chain refoulement. The State party should also establish formalized border monitoring mechanisms, in cooperation with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and civil society organizations, and take strong action to combat ill-treatment and extortion of undocumented immigrants by the police, including by sending a clear and unambiguous message that such acts are unacceptable, and by prosecuting and punishing the perpetrators.

Gender-based and domestic violence

16. The Committee regrets the lack of disaggregated data on the number of reported incidents of all forms of violence against women, and on the number of investigations and prosecutions carried out in respect of those incidents. It is also concerned about the low penalties imposed in cases of gender-based and domestic violence, the majority of which have ended in suspended sentences. The Committee also notes with concern the lack of emergency protection orders in place, the growing number of feminicides and child victims of domestic violence, and the insufficient State support and assistance provided to victims of gender-based violence during and after criminal proceedings (arts. 2, 12-14 and 16).

The State party should redouble its efforts to combat gender-based and domestic violence, inter alia, by:

(a) **Investigating, promptly, effectively and impartially, all incidents of violence and prosecuting and punishing perpetrators in accordance with the gravity of their acts;**

(b) **Ensuring the effective implementation of the State party's general and special protocols for conduct in cases of violence against women in the family and in intimate relationships and adopting new protocols for proceedings in other cases of gender-based violence;**

(c) **Ensuring that victims of gender-based violence benefit from urgent and effective protection measures and have access to sufficient and adequately funded shelters, medical and legal aid, psychosocial counselling and social support schemes;**

(d) **Establishing a centralized system of data collection covering all forms of domestic and gender-based violence in order to facilitate risk assessments, improve protection and evaluate the extent of the phenomenon and the impact of the measures taken.**

Trafficking in persons

17. While welcoming the legislative and other measures to address trafficking in persons (see para. 6 (b) above), the Committee is concerned at reports that some victims are punished for acts committed as a result of being trafficked and are not afforded sufficient protection against repeated victimization and intimidation in lengthy criminal and civil proceedings. The Committee also takes into consideration reports that funding is insufficient to provide for services for victims of trafficking and that there is a lack of mechanisms for coordination and referral between the welfare centre for victims of human trafficking and non-governmental organizations working in this area (arts. 2, 12–14 and 16).

The State party should:

(a) **Continue its efforts to enforce the anti-trafficking legislation by investigating, promptly, effectively and impartially, all incidents of trafficking and punishing trafficking offenders with appropriate penalties;**

(b) **Increase activities to raise awareness among the judiciary and law enforcement officials about the need to enhance the protection of victims of trafficking in criminal proceedings by making sure that victims are not penalized for acts committed as a result of being trafficked, by reducing the duration of trials and by avoiding witness intimidation and secondary victimization;**

(c) **Facilitate access to compensation for victims of trafficking, regardless of the outcome of criminal proceedings or the identity of the perpetrators;**

(d) **Provide sufficient State funding for assistance and reintegration services for victims of trafficking and improve the mechanisms for the identification of victims and for coordination and referral between service providers and officials;**

(e) **Undertake an impact assessment of the National Action Plan for Combating Human Trafficking 2009–2011 and adopt a new action plan without delay.**

Detention of persons with mental and psychosocial disabilities

18. Notwithstanding Law No. 45/13 on the Protection of Persons with Mental Disabilities, the Committee notes with concern that a large number of persons with mental and psychosocial disabilities, including older people, are confined involuntarily in psychiatric institutions and that almost no progress has been made towards deinstitutionalization. The Committee also takes note of reports of instances in which persons admitted against their will to psychiatric hospitals were not able to be heard before a judge or be informed of the court decision and legal remedies available. The Committee also notes that Law No. 45/13 continues to contain provisions that support the isolation and physical restraint of psychiatric patients, and is concerned at information that seclusion is still used in the Centre for Children and Youth with Developmental Disabilities in Veternik and that mechanical restraints have been used in psychiatric hospitals without continuous staff monitoring, in full view of other patients and, occasionally, for excessive periods of time. The Committee is also concerned at reports that excessive use of restrictive measures in mental health-care institutions are not sufficiently investigated (arts. 2, 11, 13 and 16).

The Committee recommends that the State party:

(a) **Accelerate the development of alternative community-based support measures to reduce the number of institutionalized persons with mental and psychosocial disabilities and ensure that involuntary confinement in places of detention, including psychiatric and social care institutions, is done only on the basis of a legal decision that is subject to periodic judicial review, guaranteeing all effective legal safeguards;**

(b) **Amend legislation to prohibit the use of seclusion on children and persons with mental and psychosocial disabilities and ensure that the use of restraints is avoided or applied only as a measure of last resort, when all other alternatives for control have failed, for the shortest possible time, under strict medical supervision, and that any such measure is duly recorded;**

(c) **Carry out frequent inspections and investigate, effectively and impartially, incidents of ill-treatment and excessive use of restrictive measures in psychiatric institutions and provide victims with remedies and redress;**

(d) **Improve the conditions of detention and treatment of persons with mental and psychosocial disabilities in psychiatric institutions and other centres in order to better respect their privacy and prepare them for an adequate return to the community.**

Attacks on journalists, human rights defenders and minorities

19. The Committee is highly concerned that human rights defenders, journalists, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex persons and members of the Roma community continue to be attacked, threatened and intimidated. It regrets the lack of complete statistics on the number of complaints of and convictions for threats and attacks on these groups and on measures taken to prevent such acts. The Committee is also greatly concerned at reports that law enforcement authorities fail to act with due diligence in investigating and punishing these cases and in applying legal provisions for crimes motivated by hate (arts. 2, 12, 13 and 16).

The Committee calls on the State party to publicly condemn threats and attacks on human rights defenders, journalists, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex persons and members of the Roma community and refrain from supporting, through action or omission, such attacks by ensuring:

(a) **The effective protection of these groups against threats and attacks to which they may be exposed on account of their activities, sexual orientation or ethnic origin;**

(b) **Prompt, thorough and effective investigations of all threats and attacks targeting these groups, including any alleged discriminatory motives that may provoke these actions, and guaranteeing that those responsible are tried and punished in accordance with the gravity of their acts;**

(c) **Effective training of law-enforcement officials and the judiciary on hate-motivated crimes and the systematic monitoring of such crimes;**

(d) **Awareness-raising measures to counter prejudice and stereotypes, and policies to combat and prevent hate-related crimes and discrimination, in particular on the basis of sexual orientation, identity or ethnic origin.**

Training

20. The Committee notes that training on the provisions of the Convention is not provided on a regular basis to persons involved in the treatment of persons deprived of their liberty. It is also concerned that the guidelines set out in the Manual on the Effective Investigation and Documentation of Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (the Istanbul Protocol) have not been fully incorporated in investigations into cases of torture or ill-treatment (art. 10).

The State party should:

(a) **Develop modules on the provisions of the Convention in the periodic and compulsory training programmes of law enforcement officials, judges, prosecutors and prison and immigration officers;**

(b) **Provide regular training on the procedures established in the Istanbul Protocol to police officers, asylum officers, judges, prosecutors, penitentiary guards, forensic doctors and personnel working at reception or detention centres, including training on detecting psychological traces of torture and on gender-sensitive approaches, and ensure that the guidelines set out in the Protocol are incorporated into the investigation of cases of torture or ill-treatment**

Protector of Citizens

21. The Committee welcomes the adoption of the Law No. 7/2011 designating the Protector of Citizens (Ombudsperson) as a national preventive mechanism (NPM). However, it is concerned about the lack of sufficient financial and permanent staffing resources provided to the Protector of Citizens to carry out the NPM mandate effectively. The Committee also regrets the lack of information regarding the degree of implementation of the order of the National Assembly to comply with the recommendations issued by the NPM in 2013. It is further concerned at the attempt by the Security Services Control Committee of the National Assembly to challenge the competence of the Protector of Citizens to act upon complaints if criminal proceedings have been initiated (art. 2).

The State party should ensure the effective and independent operation of the Protector of Citizens and refrain from encroaching upon its mandate to act on complaints in individual cases, irrespective of whether or not criminal proceedings have been initiated. The State party should also provide adequate and permanent staffing levels and material resources to ensure that the Protector of Citizens can carry out independently and effectively the national preventive mechanism mandate. The State party should also ensure that all relevant authorities comply with the order of the National Assembly to implement the recommendations of the Protector of Citizens without delay.

Independence of the judiciary

22. While welcoming the measures taken to strengthen the independence of the judiciary (see para. 7 (b) above), the Committee remains concerned that the National Assembly still endorses the nomination of candidate judges proposed by the High Judicial Council, which represents a significant parliamentary role in the selection of judges (arts. 2 and 12).

The State party should continue to take measures to ensure the full independence and impartiality of the judiciary in performing its functions, and should review the regime for the appointment of judges in the light of the Basic Principles on the Independence of the Judiciary and values 1 and 2 of the Bangalore Principles of Judicial Conduct.

Follow-up procedure

23. The Committee requests the State party to provide, by 15 May 2016, follow-up information in response to the Committee's recommendations on taking steps to ensure in practice that detained persons undergo an independent medical examination from the outset of the deprivation of liberty (see para. 9 (a) above) and publicly condemning and investigating threats to and attacks on human rights defenders, journalists, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex persons and members of the Roma community (see para. 19 above).

Other issues

24. The Committee invites the State party to ratify the core United Nations human rights treaty to which it is not yet party, namely, the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families.

25. The State party is requested to disseminate widely the report submitted to the Committee and the present concluding observations, in appropriate languages, through official websites, the media and non-governmental organizations.

26. The State party is invited to submit its next report, which will be its third periodic report, by 15 May 2019. For that purpose, the Committee will, in due course, transmit to the State party a list of issues prior to reporting, considering that the State party has accepted to report to the Committee under the optional reporting procedure.